

deemed life as a gracious gift. Against such a covenant no just mind can possibly complain.

It must be borne in mind furthermore that one of the parties to this gracious covenant was One who called himself the Son of Man and was and is "very man". He was made of a woman, made under the law that he might redeem them that are "under the law". The highest representative of our humanity was a party to that covenant, and fulfilled literally and completely all its conditions in our behalf, that God "might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus". The benefits of this covenant of grace are accordingly extended to us because its provisions have been complied with on our behalf, and in Christ, its Mediator, all who believe are entitled to the "riches of the inheritance" that comes through him.

## Sunday School

### PAUL'S LAST WORDS.

December 12, 1909. 2 Tim. 4: 1-8, 16-18.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Philip 1:21.

#### DAILY HOME READINGS.

M.—2 Tim. 4:1-18. Th.—Joshua 23:1-14.  
T.—2 Tim. 2:1-13. F.—Jude 17-25.  
W.—Deut. 31:1-13. S.—Philip. 3:13-21.  
S.—Rev. 7:9-17.

#### SHORTER CATECHISM.

Q. 85. What does God require of us that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin?

A. To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.

#### TOPICAL OUTLINE.

**How Paul Faced the End of Life—**

His last charge to Timothy, vs. 1-5.

His readiness to depart, vs. 6-8.

His first trial before Nero, vs. 16-18.

#### LESSON COMMENT.

"Under the Republic, a Roman citizen could theoretically be tried on a criminal charge only by the sovereign people." "But under the Empire this ancient system, though not formally abolished, was gradually superseded." "The emperors from the first claimed supreme judicial authority, both civil and criminal," not only for themselves, but for the delegates whom they appointed to act in their stead. These delegates were called prefects, and it is evident that Paul's second trial was conducted before this sort of officer, appointed by Nero, the Caesar, or Emperor.

The place of trial was probably in one of the basilicas, or public colonnade buildings of the forum, where merchants, soldiers, etc., were accustomed to congregate, and where trials, etc., were conducted. "Two of the most celebrated of these edifices were called the Pauline Basilicas, from the well-known Lucius Aemilius Paulus, who had built one of them and restored the other. It is not improbable that the greatest man who ever bore the Pauline name was tried in one of these." The supposition (that the trial was conducted in one of the great basilicas) appears plausible from the fact that in his defense, which he made alone and for himself, no man standing with him, he spoke before a great audience, so that "all the Gentiles might hear."

This defense appears to have been the culmination, the final and triumphant speech of the Apostle's great career. Against all accusers he seems to have demonstrated the fact that he had no part (and could not have had) in burning the city of Rome (this probably being the first item in the indictment). Had his enemies succeeded in making good this charge, even by false witnesses, the Apostle would have been cast before the lion as food; but, he adds, "I was delivered from the lion's mouth." It was not appointed to him to go to his death as a common criminal, though many believers were thus appointed.

The next charge, that of propagating a new and illicit religion (*religio nova et illicita*) was yet to be answered, and to that Paul would have to plead guilty. He knew that this meant his death, and even now, while writing his last letter, the second to Timothy, he frankly avers, "I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come."

Under the circumstances, the subject matter of the lesson in hand, in addition to the fact that it is the utterance of God's Holy Spirit, is clothed with unusual fervency, incentive and power. There is not space to expound and illustrate. The lesson should be read and re-read and committed to the heart's memory.

The charge (vs. 1-5), "preach the Word," points out the limitations of Timothy and of every one who has received the sacred trust of doing or teaching in the service of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. God has appointed the "Word of God", Jesus Christ our Lord has both used it and directed that it, and it only, be the weapon of conquest. It is by this Word that he will save men; by this also will he judge in the last day. How diligently, skillfully, persistently it should be used! The time has come again and again, and will come when men will object to the subject matter of that Word. It is too plain, too harsh; it must be diluted, and, in fact, much of it is probably traditional. Now, Paul was speaking of the Old Testament. That was his Bible. This was (much of it), in his case (not a cloak, I think), in Troas. These parchments he loved and longed for. He had preached this Word for thirty years and had set, not Rome only, but the world, on fire. It was burning then, is burning yet, and will continue.

Vs. 7, 8 give us his personal confession, "I have fought a good fight." It comes to this with all of us sooner or later. Which have I done? What is the nature of the battle I have fought? Without a personal battle, within (first) and without, there can be no proper teaching or preaching of the Word. The fight of Paul was "good" not because of any innate goodness in him (that he did not claim), but because it was (1) in a good cause, for truth against falsehood, for righteousness against sin; (2) it was unselfish, not for himself, but for God in Christ and his Kingdom; (3) it was sincere, persistent and went to the limit of his ability; (4) it issued in victory in his case, and will in every case that is sincere. No fight is good that does not issue in victory. A fight that fails utterly and finally is not "good", for the truth is invincible and can never fail. After the fight comes the crown assigned to contestants—Paul and all others—who have "fought a good fight". A crown is nothing within itself, but as a testimony of attainment its worth is beyond all computation. This crown for Paul and all others who "fight the good fight" is an award that a righteous verdict will surely bestow, and will bestow because the winner is faithful, not in a part, but in all the fight till death gives the signal for the battle to cease. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." There is a "righteousness", a "justification unto life" that Christ gives to every believer at the beginning of the battle. This the believer puts on as one of his chief pieces of armor—the "breastplate of righteousness"; it is the great protection in the hour of darkest conflict, when the darts of the devil are flying thick and fast. This righteousness can not be won; it is bought by the blood of Christ, and by him given to him who will receive it and enter the fight. The crown comes at the close, when the Lord himself appears to his own, who loves his appearing. "I will come again and receive you unto myself."

Here we have Paul's version of death. It is a time of "departure"; it is a time of receiving a crown; it is the time of "the Lord's appearing" to those who love his appearing.

Fayetteville, Ark.

R. B. Willis.

#### MORE AND MORE.

He who hath made thee whole will heal thee day by day;  
He who hath spoken to thy soul hath many things to say;  
He who hath greatly taught yet more will make thee know;  
He who so wondrously hath wrought yet greater things will show;  
He who hath given thee grace yet more and more will send;  
He who hath set thee in the race will speed thee to the end.